

It may be that behind this scorn and hatred of reality lay a dread of it, occasioned by some accident of childhood, hidden now beyond the probings of psychology.

Such a rejection of life might indeed be attributed to simple lack of vitality and animal spirits in one who once described himself as 'ne ennuye'; but the man who could work continuously for eight days with only ten hours sleep, and read two thousand volumes as a preparation for *Bouvard et Pecuchet*, had more vitality than most, when he chose. There lay also, I feel, a certain fierce timidity behind his 'incommensurable mepris pour On', his scorn for public bodies like the Academy, his horror of public positions such as even that sinecure at the Bibliotheque

Mazarine offered him when he was old and impoverished,

Even to give his own work to the public half disgusted

him; he would as soon have his manuscripts buried with

him. It is curious too that, as has been remarked, of the

three women who mattered emotionally in his life, one

was his mother, of whose death after a whole life spent

with him, when he was fifty-one, he wrote that he real-

ised he had lost the being he loved most in the world; the •

second was Mme. Scfiesinger, the original of Mme.

Arnoux in *L'Education Sentimentale*, a woman thirteen¹

years older, whom he loved in passionate silence when he

was fifteen; the third was Louise Colet,³ herself eleven!

years his senior. Younger women seem not to have

³Space is here wanting to describe this pathetic, histrionic woman, whose life has been written by Miss Doris Enfield. Surely, the reader feels, it was the hand of Yuk Himself that united Flaubert with this fantastic creature, who called on Alphonse Karr in a cab in order to stab him (quite ineffectively) on his own stairs with a carving-knife; and whose way it was to remark 'Do you know the lost arms, of the Valms de Milo have been discovered?' and then, when the innocent hearer replied 'No. Where?', to answer 'In the sleeves of my dress'.

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